

VZCZCXRO6686
OO RUEHBC RUEHBI RUEHCI RUEHDBU RUEHDE RUEHDIR RUEHKUK RUEHLH RUEHNEH
RUEHPW RUEHTRO
DE RUEHNE #1210/01 1621751
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 111751Z JUN 09
FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6947
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE
RUCNCLS/ALL SOUTH AND CENTRAL ASIA COLLECTIVE
RUCNIRA/IRAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHBJ/AMEMBASSY BEIJING 7762
RUEHRL/AMEMBASSY BERLIN 1378
RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA 1485
RUEHLO/AMEMBASSY LONDON 6499
RUEHMO/AMEMBASSY MOSCOW 3501
RUEHFR/AMEMBASSY PARIS 1788
RUEHGO/AMEMBASSY RANGOON 1309
RUEHUL/AMEMBASSY SEOUL 1512
RUEHKO/AMEMBASSY TOKYO 6376
RHMCSUU/HQ USCENTCOM MACDILL AFB FL
RHEHAAA/WHITE HOUSE WASHDC
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC
RHHMUNA/HQ USPACOM HONOLULU HI
RUEKJCS/JOINT STAFF WASHDC
RUEIDN/DNI WASHINGTON DC
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 8151

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 NEW DELHI 001210

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 06/11/2019

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [MOPS](#) [PK](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: FS MENON AND U/S BURNS DISCUSS REGIONAL SECURITY

Classified By: CDA Peter Burleigh for Reasons 1.4 (B and D)

11. (C) SUMMARY. Foreign Secretary Menon and visiting Under Secretary for Political Affairs Bill Burns discussed regional security June 10, with a focus on Afghanistan and Pakistan. Menon referred to Prime Minister Singh's June 9 comments in Parliament that the Composite Dialogue could not resume until Pakistan took credible action to dismantle terrorist infrastructure, but also confirmed that Singh planned to meet Pakistan President Zardari at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization ministerial in Yekaterinburg next week. Menon cautioned, however, that a resumption of the Composite Dialogue, which failed to prevent the Mumbai attacks, would be indefensible for the government without prior credible action by Pakistan. Menon viewed Afghanistan as a more hopeful prospect, despite its problems, and welcomed increased regional cooperation. Sri Lanka's Senior Presidential Advisor Basil Rajapaksa planned to visit India next week. On-going political competition among Nepal's Maoists meant that Nepal had returned to politics as usual, suggesting to Menon that they were not yet prepared to take up arms again. Additional Secretary Katju sought clarification on the U.S. position with regard to several UN-related issues, including India's proposal for a UN Convention Against Terrorism and Security Council reform. The conversation also touched on Iran, North Korea, and Burma. END SUMMARY.

12. (SBU) Participants:

Under Secretary William Burns
Assistant Secretary Robert Blake
Charge d'Affaires Ambassador Peter Burleigh
Deputy Director of Policy Planning Derek Chollet
Deputy Chief of Mission Steven White
Acting Political Counselor Les Viguerie
P Staff Tom West
Political Officer David Holmes (note-taker)

Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon

Additional Secretary Vivek Katju
Ambassador to the United States Meera Shankar
Joint Secretary for the Americas Gaitri Kumar
Joint Secretary for Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Maldives, and
Myanmar T.S. Tirumurti
Joint Secretary for Pakistan, Afghanistan, and Iran T.C.A.
Raghvan

Menon and Burns Discuss Regional Issues

- - -

13. (C) Foreign Secretary Shivshankar Menon shared perspectives on regional issues, as well as United Nations issues, over lunch with visiting Under Secretary for Political Affairs William Burns June 10. The conversation focused on Afghanistan and Pakistan, and also touched on Sri Lanka, Nepal, Iran, North Korea, and Burma.

Af-Pak: PM to Meet Zadari, but No Composite Dialogue

- - -

14. (C) Menon referred to Prime Minister Singh's June 9 comments in Parliament that the Composite Dialogue could not resume until Pakistan took credible action to dismantle terrorist infrastructure. Menon said there is a "strategic imperative for peace," observing that a stable Pakistan is in India's interest. He added, however, "Not much of what we see indicates that peace will come about soon." India has no confidence that the various power centers in Pakistan are united and committed to a peaceful relationship with India; even if they were, Menon said he was not sure the Pakistan

NEW DELHI 00001210 002 OF 003

government would have the power to bring it about. Menon said India talked to Pakistan "all the time" via the Indian High Commission in Islamabad, but any public Indian initiative is vulnerable to opponents in Pakistan. He observed that Pakistan's actions in Swat are a military operation meant to address what is fundamentally a political problem, which could have the effect of "creating more recruits" at a time when radicalization is spreading across the Indus River and erasing distinctions between terrorist groups. Menon confided that India shares the view that the security of Pakistan's nuclear arsenal is a serious issue, but there is "no point" in India speaking publicly about it. Menon concluded that while India is concerned about Pakistan's stability, it has very limited means to address this issue. India has no clear answers, but does believe in a clear confluence of interests to oppose radicalism and terrorism. Burns said we share many of the same uncertainties and agree that a political solution is necessary, adding that the U.S. government is committed to transparency with India.

15. (C) In a one-on-one meeting earlier in the day (septel), Menon shared that Prime Minister Singh planned to meet Pakistan President Zardari at the Shanghai Cooperation Organization ministerial in Yekatarinburg, Russia next week. Menon said PM Singh did not have much confidence in Zardari but had concluded that there was no alternative. Menon cautioned, however, that the Indian government was not in a position to resume the Composite Dialogue without credible action by Pakistan to dismantle terrorist infrastructure. Menon explained that the Mumbai attacks took place while the Composite Dialogue was underway, and Indians would not understand why it would be resumed when it had failed to prevent Pakistan-based terrorist attacks in the first place.

16. (C) Despite its problems, Menon said he viewed Afghanistan as a more hopeful prospect than Pakistan. Burns replied that he, too, was optimistic, citing improved regional cooperation to tackle the problems in Afghanistan. J/S Raghvan observed that an Af-Pak transit trade agreement could be an extremely important development for Afghanistan, yielding considerable benefits within three or four years and reducing the incentives among farmers to grow poppy.

Iran: Playing a Mixed Game in Afghanistan

- - -

17. (C) Menon inquired about Iran's role in Afghanistan, observing that Iran seems to play a mixed game and confirming that India tends to receive disparate messages from different channels. Burns asked Menon to convey to his Iranian counterparts that engagement with the U.S. is an opportunity Iran cannot afford to miss, while allowing that engagement will be a very difficult process.

Sri Lanka: Pressing for Reconciliation

- - -

18. (C) Assistant Secretary Blake said the U.S. is hoping to see progress on reconciliation and humanitarian relief in Sri Lanka, but progress on the former so far has been slow. Menon shared that Senior Presidential Advisor Basil Rajapaksa and other Sri Lankan officials are planning to visit India next week. India has opened a health care facility and hopes to provide assistance with livelihoods for displaced persons.

Menon confessed that he is not sure where the Lankans' hesitation to pursue more robust reconciliation comes from. Their impulse to expand the military further is not a good idea. Sri Lankan officials have balked at the idea of a large international conference to coordinate assistance, but they appear untroubled by individual efforts by various

NEW DELHI 00001210 003 OF 003

countries. Menon said he was skeptical of an idea voiced in the Indian media to appoint a special envoy on Sri Lanka, saying envoys tend to become lightning rods. Asked about the appointment of a Tamil advisor in the government, Menon said Sri Lankan officials claim to have two Tamils, but it is not making a difference in practice.

Nepal: Internal Power Struggle Not Resolved

- - -

19. (C) Menon observed that Nepal's internal problems continued and the Maoist themselves face division which adds to the turmoil as power shifts. Competition for positions of influence means that Nepal has returned to politics as usual.

As long as that political competition exists, Maoists will not take up arms again. Whether they'll settle quickly, Menon did not know. Menon speculated that a few months in power has made them think differently.

North Korea and Burma

- - -

110. (C) Menon observed that a dialogue on Asian security would be useful, including on the DPRK. Burns shared that the current agitation in North Korea seems to be triggered by the internal succession process. He flagged for Menon efforts in the UN Security Council to seek tougher sanctions, but noted Chinese and Russian sensitivities. Menon noted that the UN Secretary General planned to get involved and would visit Burma, but the Burmese have said he cannot interfere with their process of democratization, including planned elections for next year.

UN Terrorism Convention and Security Council Reform

- - -

111. (C) Additional Secretary Katju also raised several UN-related issues. With regard to India's proposal for a UN Convention Against Terrorism, Katju inquired whether a reference to self-determination in the preamble would be acceptable to the U.S. Ambassador Burleigh explained that the conduct of national liberation movements could not be excluded from the scope of the agreement and that it was important to maintain a unified position in support of maintaining the standard military carve-out language. On Security Council reform, Katju said his understanding was

that the U.S. had not yet made up its mind on how to proceed.

He observed that intermediate solutions do not resolve the basic issue. Burns said there are many possible approaches, but the new administration has not yet formulated its views. There was, however, a clear recognition that the current configuration was not adequate, as well as a commitment to making the UN effective.

¶12. (U) Under Secretary Burns cleared this message.

BURLEIGH